

Speech and Drama

BY

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LECTURES GIVEN IN THE
SECTION FOR THE ARTS OF SPEECH AND MUSIC
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With a Foreword by

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'Speak, O Man,—
and thou reveallest through thee
the Becoming of the Worlds.'

(From Rudolf Steiner's Lectures
on the Mysteries of Ephesus.)

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trouble to carry his knowledge of the pronunciation a little further than our 'Guide' (as can easily be done with the guidance given at the beginning of most German dictionaries and grammars, or with the help of a friend), he will be able to read the passages aloud with a tolerable degree of accuracy, and thus experience for himself in some small measure their 'sound' value. For this possibility we have to thank the fact that German spelling is far more simple and consistent than our own.

Many kind friends have given help in diverse ways in the preparation of this book. Special thanks are due to Mrs. Violet E. Watkin, who has translated several of the German and French Readings and verses; to Mr. Jesse Darrell, who has read the manuscript through and made helpful criticisms; to Miss Maud Surrey, whose long experience has enabled her to give advice on many points; and to my life's friend and companion, George Adams, without whose continual aid and encouragement the task could never have been carried through. I would like also to express my gratitude to Herr Edwin Froböse for his valuable assistance in regard to doubtful or difficult passages in the text, and to the friends at Sunfield for the warm-hearted and practical interest they have taken in the work throughout.

A translation is never final. It is the hope of all who have been concerned in this first published attempt that it may stimulate some lovers of Speech and Drama to enter upon a serious study of what Rudolf Steiner has given in this domain.

MARY ADAMS

*Sunfield Childrens Homes,
Clent Grove,
Worcs.*

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17th September, 1924. 291

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In Aristotle's definition of tragedy, we can see a reflection of what took place in the Mysteries for the ensouling of man. Through the experience of spoken sound, man was to attain catharsis. The art of the stage must again become an experience of the soul,—of the soul

that has been incorporated in speech and gesture. The picture of the stage must harmonise with this experience. The décor is not finished until, illuminated by the stage-lighting, it is seen in conjunction with the action on the stage. It demands a stylisation, not in form or line, but in colour and in light. In colour lives soul. *Costume* is the means whereby the characters show their individual colouring, *stage-lighting* has to accord with the varying moods of the characters, and outer *décor* with what the general situation requires. In the colours, human feelings are as it were captured and held fast. Study of the rainbow.

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Art has to derive its impulse from the spiritual world; if this be forgotten, art gives place either to routine or to naturalism. The actor has to play upon his body as upon an instrument, and be able at the same time to take the fullest interest in his own acting that he has first objectified. To move artistically on the stage has to be learned on an inward path. The actor should consciously conjure up before him again and again his dream experiences. Continual practice in passing from the full tide of daily life to the solitary living in one's dreams will lead him to a more and more inward understanding of his role. He will acquire a dreamlike experience of the play as a whole, beholding it spread out as a tableau before him, and out of that experience find for his own part in it the right gestures and actions. Imagination and fantasy are essential to dramatic art.

19th September, 1924. 329

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Love and humour, as we know them on the stage to-day, had not yet a place. Then came the development of *character*; in place of the mask of ancient times, we have the character mask, and gradually the type gives way before the individual. Instead of destiny, it is now the characters that determine the action. Finally, *plot* emerges as the dominant feature. In a school of dramatic art, the history of the art should be studied, and in particular the early 'character' plays of mediaeval times. Sketch of a play of this type. It is from these folk-plays, full of elemental humour, that comedy was born. Such a study gives the right mood in which to set about producing on the one hand tragedy or on the other hand comedy. Meditative exercises to this end.

20th September, 1924. 346

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The student should be led to perceive what it is that happens within him when he speaks: his astral body seizes hold of his ether body, thereby setting free in him a second man who lives in the speaking. Exercises for a fuller experience of the sounds discover to the student the secret of the word. He should also learn how to take every perception into the realm of the intimate. Such things have to be learned as a matter of technique; but we must be alive to their spiritual significance; only then will it be possible for art to take its right place in life. The influences exercised by different rhythms. A poem of Mission.

21st September, 1924. 364

Lecture 18. THE SPEECH SOUNDS AS A REVELATION OF THE FORM OF MAN. CONTROL OF THE BREATH.

Two things are necessary: to pursue an intensive study of speech and gesture, and to give to the art of the stage its right place in life. In the human form the universe is revealed; in the forming of word and sound man is revealed. The speech organism itself teaches us how to speak; the organs of throat and mouth become the pupils of the sounds. The sounds are the Gods who instruct us; we must approach them with reverence. Right speaking depends on the use to

the full of the inbreathed air; this is an indispensable rule. Every detail of dramatic activity has to be approached with religious devotion; then the actor will not fall a victim to the dangers that beset his work and that can have a demoralising effect. The two worlds: stage and audience. Maeterlinck's *L'Intruse*. The actor and the dramatic critic.

22nd September, 1924. 379

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The whole sound-system of speech expresses the relation of the several organs of speech to the entire human organism. Sounds spoken by means of the palate, for instance, go right through man to his heels and toes, and are on this account a good exercise for stage walking. Right speaking renders man's body lithe and supple, even down to the very forms of the organs. Speech, when we see it as a complete organism, is man himself in every possible shade of feeling. Speech can become for us increasingly objective. A naturalism that simply imitates, substitutes for the animal mask of older times a mask of the soul. When the actor enters fully into the feeling of the sounds, an abyss separates him from the audience, who recognise only the meaning of the words. The actor's art then becomes for him a veritable 'service of sacrifice', whereby the spiritual is brought into the world of the physical. The actor learns first to *hear* his part in the spirit; then, as he speaks it, he will live in the words. Passages from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

23rd September, 1924. 393

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